



City Councilmember

Carl DeMaio

News Release

DeMaio Opposes City Proposal to Impose a “Cat Tax”

Intrusive Requirement Simply a “Revenue Grab” and Creates Unnecessary Bureaucracy

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CONTACT: Jeff Powell, 619-236-6655

SAN DIEGO – Councilmember DeMaio today urged the Mayor and his Council colleagues to “send to the litter box” a proposal unveiled at the City’s Audit Committee which would require every San Diegan who owns a cat to register their cat and pay a fee – roughly \$25 – with the goal of generating half-a-million dollars for the cash-strapped city government.

“The Cat Tax amounts to yet another cost to San Diegans and imposes yet another regulation – all of which of course will all have to be administered by an expanded government bureaucracy,” warned DeMaio. “A city government that cannot deliver on the basic services should not be expanding its bureaucracy and regulations into these areas,” urged DeMaio.

The proposal, which is contained in a report titled “Performance Audit of Animal Services Agreement” urges that pet owners should be required to “register their feline companions,” and argues that, “beyond improving public health and safety, cat registration also provides an opportunity to more equitably distribute the burden of paying for the (City’s) Animal Services Agreement.”

The report suggests that a licensing and fee program could reduce potential for animal diseases such as rabies, but the DeMaio points out the report fails to provide evidence of extraordinary cases to justify creation of a whole new regulatory program and imposition of costs on San Diegans.

“This Cat Tax is driven not by a legitimate need, but instead is a flawed attempt to generate revenue for the city in the middle of a budget crisis,” concluded DeMaio.

Reinforcing DeMaio’s concern, the report outlining the proposal includes a chart detailing “Estimated Additional Revenue from Cat Licensing” (See attached Chart from page 35 of the report) showing more than half-a-million dollars can be generated with just a 5% compliance rate on more than 360,000 cats living in the city.

“We have more pressing issues to tackle than creating a Cat Tax,” DeMaio contends. “I urge the Mayor and City Council to send this flawed idea back to where it belongs: the litter box.”

Below is the chart from page 35 of the city report showing the clear revenue-generating purpose behind the proposed licensing fee:

Estimated Additional Revenue from Cat Licensing

	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Population	1,311,162	1,316,837	1,336,865
Estimated Cat Population (1)	366,189	367,774	373,367
City license compliance rate	5%	5%	5%
Licensed Cats	18,309	18,389	18,668
New Licenses Sold (2)	10,067	9,692	10,298
Average revenue per license(3)	\$ 25.51	\$ 25.01	\$ 24.90
Additional City costs (4)	35,472	36,537	37,633
Additional cost recovery revenue	221,362	205,851	218,778
Net Revenue			\$ 536,350
(1) Calculated from formula endorsed by the Humane Society of the United States			
(2) New licenses matches proportion of dog licenses sold to total licensed dogs in the City			
(3) Average revenue per license is a weighted average based on the quantity of each license type purchased.			
(4) Additional City costs are the City's proportion of the salary (\$37,570) and benefits (\$22,860) for an additional Animal Services Representative. Annual inflation is 3%.			

Source: San Diego County Department of Animal Services